



C. 211 n  
18



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2018 with funding from  
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b28780395>





T H E  
COBLER'S LETTER

TO THE  
Author of Thelyphthora,

INTENDED AS A  
S U P P L E M E N T  
T O

Mr. HILL'S ADDRESS,  
INTITLED,

*“ The Blessings of Polygamy.”*

---

*A Brother offended is harder to be won than a strong  
City. PROV. xviii. 19.*

---

L O N D O N :

Sold by J. MATHEWS, in the Strand ; C. DILLY, in the  
Poultry ; and by J. EDDOWES, in Shrewsbury.

M D C C L X X X I .

[Price ONE SHILLING.]



---

---

THE  
COBLER'S LETTER  
TO THE  
AUTHOR OF THELYPHTHORA.

LONDON, May 5, 1781.

REV. and DEAR SIR,

WHY are you so much displeased? I am sure there is no intentional unkindness towards you, no designed *asperity of expression* or *personal reflection* which might either *hurt you in your own mind*, or *injure your character in the sight of the world*, throughout my late publication intitled "The Blessings of Polygamy." So far from it, whilst you are complaining of my having treated you with *too little respect*, I have been greatly blamed for hav-



ing treated you with *too much*. I stand convicted however by your reproof for having addressed you by name ; there certainly would have been more delicacy in not having done so, as you had not publicly declared yourself to be the author of *Thelyphthora* : and when my book was about half printed off, I was aware that you would blame me on that account. But as you always and upon every occasion acknowledged the production to be your's, and had, in several publications previous to mine, been addressed as the writer of it, without once disowning it, I really thought that any attempt on my part to screen my friend from public view, would have appeared almost as ridiculous as the command of *Sir John Falstaff* to his page to stand close by him that he might escape the eyes of the *chief Justice*. I am sure you will give me full credit when I assure you that I most sincerely wish, *first*, that you were *not* the author of *Thelyphthora* ; *secondly*, that nobody knew that you *were* the author : And if you believe these two declarations, you can never think that I took a pleasure in making you pass for that author against your own inclinations.

Another



Another reason occurred to me for addressing you by name. I was happy to let all the world know the regard and friendship I had for you; and this could not be done, at least not so effectually, if I had considered you as anonymous.

Again, After what you yourself have said of *Thelyphthora*, as being one of the most *important and interesting publications that have appeared since the Reformation*, and judged to be so by *many eminently learned and pious men* [A], and calculated both to *entertain and edify* the reader, I must necessarily suppose that though a modest diffidence forbade you to affix your name to it yourself, yet that you would rather esteem it a compliment than an injury to announce to the world the author of such a performance.

These are the chief of my reasons for having addressed you by name; and I hope you will admit them as good ones.

[A] I know not who the author particularly means by these *eminently learned and pious men*: but it is very certain that some who both for *learning and piety* are exceeded by few, do at this time, form a very different idea of *Thelyphthora*, than what they did on the first hasty perusal of it; and would be sincerely grieved to have their names made use of as abettors of it.

If you will I shall be happy ; but whether you will or not, I ask your pardon for having done it.

The next complaint you make against me, is, for not having submitted my manuscript to your perusal before it went to the press.

But what reason could you have to expect this, after the friendly letter of remonstrance which I wrote you so many months before ? Had I not at least as much cause to expect you would have shewn me your manuscript as any other person who had the revisal of it ? But you judged that I should have discouraged the publication of it ; and you judged right. The very same conclusion therefore that I suppose prevented you from letting me see your *Treatise on female ruin* (as well as your letter to *Richard Hill, Esq.* at the end of your third volume) prevented me from asking your opinion on my late piece, *viz.* I took it for granted that you would as heartily disapprove my *Answer*, as I should have disapproved your *Treatise* ; and that you would have been for taking out so much of my own matter, and for putting in so many insertions of your own, which

I in



I in my turn, should have been for taking out afterwards, that between us both we should have brought the poor *Blessings of Polygamy*, into the situation of *Æsop's* man, who had two wives (my friend will excuse the comparison) the one of whom plucked out all his black hairs, the other all his grey ones.

A third complaint my friend has against me, is, that I treat the doctrine of Polygamy with *facetious raillery*, and *invent cases* to make it appear *ridiculous*, and that I *shock* him with the *peremptoriness* of my *determinations*.

On which side the most *peremptory determinations* are to be found let all readers judge. I will be silent.

As to the *ridicule* and *facetious raillery* you talk of, I cannot but think them very allowable, if they prove the means of exposing a practice which in its consequences must be as pernicious to the welfare of society, as destructive to the peace of private families. I have often heard my friend speak in the highest terms of Mr. *Vincent Alesop's* book intitled, *Antisozzo*, which from the beginning to the end consists of the most acute raillery against *Doctor Sherlock*  
on



on account of some expressions in a piece published by the *Doctor*, intitled, if I remember right, “The knowledge of Christ.”

If indeed I had made any of *God's dispensations* the subjects of raillery, I should think my friend did me no unkindness at all in ranking me (indirectly at least) with Lord *Bolingbroke* or *Voltaire*. But I deny that Polygamy ever was of *God's institution*, or any part of *his dispensations*.——But, if it were not for a little *facetious raillery*, and a few pleasant stories, what must have been the fate of *Thelyphthora*? If, notwithstanding all the *variety of entertaining matter* with which that *Treatise* abounds, any person could be so stupid as to *yawn* and *nod* at the reading it, as the whole court of Charles the Second did at the hearing *Doctor South's* sermons; [B] I say, what must it have been if the author had not by mixing

[B] Old *South* a witty churchman reckon'd,  
Was preaching once to *Charles* the second.  
But far too serious for a court  
Which of all preaching made a sport,  
The good and zealous man of God,  
Observ'd his audience *yawn* and *nod*,  
And finding nothing wou'd avail,  
Call'd to the Earl of *Lauderdale*,  
“My Lord, why 'tis a monstrous thing,  
“You snore so loud, you'll wake the king.”

the *utile dulci* delivered it from the *tiresome dryness* which usually attends *Treatise-writing*? Besides, where shall we find a more lively fallacy of wit and *facetious raillery* than the author of *Thelyphthora* has entertained us with in comparing *Mr. Hill* to a cobbler, because *Mr. Hill* owns he does not understand Hebrew? You remember the old proverb, says he, *Ne Sutor, &c.* Yes, my friend, I remember it well. And I think you will not soon forget it. The whole proverb runs thus. *Ne Sutor ultra crepidam.* In English, “*Cobbler keep to thy Last.*” Or more literally “*Let not the Cobbler go beyond his Last.*” But when applied to the purpose of the author of *Thelyphthora*, (I will put on the cap because it fits me) “*Let not Mr. Hill pretend to be a critic or philologist, at least not a Hebrew critic, whilst he remains totally unacquainted with that language.*” Why truly if *Mr. Hill* had had the advantage of a skilful Hebræan friend at his elbow, or who lived at a few yards distance from him, and if he had been willing to have availed himself of such advantage, he might not have made that contemptible diminutive figure in the eyes of a learned *Colossus* he now does. But  
to



to own the truth, *Mr. Hill* (feigned as the sense of the deficiency of his own abilities may be) chose rather to pass for a *Cobler* as he is, than to exalt himself on stilts not his own, or to strut about like *Æsop's* daw in borrowed plumes, or *Æsop's* ass in the lion's skin.

I remember well last winter when Admiral *Keppel* was speaking in the house of Commons, he said he would not from thenceforth call *Sir Hugh Palliser* by his own name, but by the name of *the Governor of Greenwich Hospital*, which he accordingly did in every other speech he made during the different times the business relative to the *Portsmouth* Court Martial, or any thing else which concerned the Navy was debated.—So,—*Si parva liceat componere magnis*, every time I have occasion to introduce my own insignificant name, instead of *Richard Hill*, I shall call myself *the Cobler*. And if we consider into what great and respectable company I shall introduce myself by the appellation, perhaps there may be more pride than humility in my assuming it. Nay, I know not whether it may not be at least as honorable as being stiled *Governor of Greenwich Hospital*. For  
First.



*First.* We have had, (far be it from me to say we *now* have) cobblers at the helm of Government, even at the head of all our public affairs. These I would stile *State Cobblers*. Such persons set themselves to patch and mend, and mend and patch again, till they cannot make both *ends* meet at the *Last*. By which means they suffer the whole nation to go barefoot; and after having cobbled and cobbled, till they have cobbled away all the leather, 'tis well if they don't some time or other bring Englishmen to wear *wooden shoes*. These cobblers are happy when they can get the length of any royal foot, and often try to measure the feet of the members of the House of Commons.

N. B. This class of cobblers make much use of the *hammer* and *pincers* in their *work*; and though they *lacker* it well when it is finished, yet it will seldom bear the day-light. Besides the *blackening* they use is apt to come off, and sadly sullies the fingers.

*Secondly.* We have very exalted Cobblers in Divinity. There are plenty of these

these in our large Collegiate cities, who (like their brethren of the *black apron*,) carry on their trade in *Stalls*, though they prefer cobling on a *Bench* when it is in their power. And whilst they are in their *Stalls*, you may sometimes hear them *singing amain*, thereby shewing that they are either well pleased with their work or their wages. However, these coblers in general, (for the picture I give of the most is by no means intended as a representation of all, but very far from it) do very little business in their profession, scarcely mending a *sole* from one year's end to another; and what little they do attempt, is with that sort of leather which is *against the grain*, or as I believe shoemakers call it *black of the grain*. And multitudes among them if they do but cobble a little now and then on a Sunday, think this sufficient reason for being idle all the rest of the week.

I might shew in several more instances (but let these suffice) that there are many great men who are coblers in all professions, and that therefore there is no shame at all in my being dubbed *a cobbler in criticism* by the learned author of *Thelyphthora*.

—From



—From henceforth therefore I am—“ *the  
Cobler.*”—But to the point,

I.

You object that the cobbler charges you with recommending an *indiscriminate* and *unlimited* practice of Polygamy, and wanting a law to establish it: and then you bring quotations from *Thelyphthora* to prove that I have either misunderstood or misrepresented your meaning. Yet in these very quotations you affirm Polygamy in general to be both *lawful* and *innocent in itself*, in many cases *expedient*, in some *duty*, and only sinful by *abuse* or *excess*. However, let me transcribe your own words.

“ That Polygamy is lawful in itself, and  
“ in many cases expedient, in some duty,  
“ none can deny who will yield to the testimony of the scriptures, and plain matter of fact. But where it is entered  
“ upon with no other view than to pamper the appetite, and to indulge a love  
“ of variety, it degenerates into evil, and  
“ seems to be to marriage, what gluttony,  
“ drunkenness and excess of apparel are to food and raiment—a *sinful*, because a  
“ forbidden abuse of *lawful* and *necessary*  
“ things.”

And



And would my friend attempt to prove from hence that he is not a *maintainer* and *recommender* of *indiscriminate and unlimited Polygamy*? What! when he compares it to our very meat, and drink, and cloathing, without which no man whatever can exist? I readily allow that you are speaking against the *abuse* or *excess* of these things, and not against the lawful use of them, therefore the drift of your argument must be to prove that though a moderate use of meat, drink, and apparel be expedient and necessary for all men, but gluttony, drunkenness, and pride of dress are abominable and sinful, so a moderate use of Polygamy is *denied to none*, and only becomes sinful when indulged to excess (and who is to define what is meant by an *excess of Polygamy*) and in order to pamper the libidinous appetite.—Giving your reasoning it's full scope, this is what it must amount to; and the very same thing may be said even of the use of the marriage bed itself. And indeed in the above quotation, as you do in every other part of your performance, (particularly in a note in your third volume, p. 94. which I have only just dipped into, though I intend, *if God spare my life* to

to labor through it) you put marriage and Polygamy intirely upon the same footing [C]. 'Tis in vain my friend offers his qualifying passages whilst these are his avowed sentiments, and whilst in so many other parts of his book he gives as general an indulgence for the practice of Polygamy as the pope himself does for whoredom, by licensing the public stews at *Rome*. Had you pursued any regular plan in your *Treatise*, and not run from one thing to another in the loose unconnected manner you have done, it would have been more easy to have followed you throughout; but this is certain, that whatever title your different chapters may bear, Polygamy, Polygamy, Polygamy is the great point in view.—Polygamy, Polygamy, Polygamy the constant burden of the song.

However, let the cobbler now put a plain question or two, by which, if you

[C] The note runs as follows.—“The authority on which this practice (*Polygamy*) being the same on which *marriage itself* is prohibited, in so many instances unknown to the *scriptures*, must, to be sure, be truly respectable!”

The author of *Thelyphthora* allows nobody to speak in a way of sneer and sarcasm but himself.

will



will answer explicitly, your sentiments may perhaps be better understood.

1st. Is it lawful in the sight of God for any man who has a wife (and I will add, children by that wife) to make his proposals and to take another in her life-time?—Would he commit sin in so doing?

2dly. As you state perverseness of temper in the woman to be a ground for Polygamy, I should be glad to know who is to be the judge of this perverseness of temper? Who is to determine whether it may not be wholly owing to the tyrannical behavior or want of affection in the husband? Upon this vague notion, every man might become a Polygamist where he and his wife had no right to demand the *fitch of bacon*. The idea that a man and his wife are coupled not only *for better for worse*, but for life also, causes much mutual forbearance, and prevents many a conjugal dispute: but whilst the husband can think himself at liberty to take a *second* or a *third*, whenever *Madam* is not quite so pleasant as she might be, would not this be the means of creating quarrels without number, and threatenings without end; especially when the husband happened to cast his eye on any particular



particular object of delight, whom he wished to have the enjoyment of? In such case, might he not say, "Well, I have nothing to do, but to go home and teaze my wife and put her out of humor, and then that dear creature may be my own." Vain indeed would be the author of *Thelyphthora's* specious qualifying sentences to restrain such a man from his purpose; especially whilst the same author tells him with the same breath, that Polygamy is *a link in the chain of God's dispensations*, and is in itself both *lawful* and *innocent*.

As to the cases of *Lunacy*, or of absolute *Barrenness* on the side of the woman, I would rather be silent on these points than discuss them: only, I would briefly observe, that if the purport of your book had been to prove that under such circumstances divorce ought to be obtained from our courts of law, and the man have leave to marry again, I should not have disturbed you in the quiet possession of your opinion; though if we had talked the matter over in private, I should have observed that a thing of that sort ought to be entered upon with great deliberation; since the woman who might at one time be disor-

dered in her senses, might not perhaps always continue so; and seeing that *children and the fruit of the womb* were pronounced by the mouth of inspiration to be *a gift and heritage that cometh of the Lord*, therefore she who at one time might be accounted a *barren woman*, might afterwards (even many years afterwards) *keep house* and be *a joyful mother of children*. And should this be the case, the highest injury would be done to the first wife, by putting her away and taking another. I might also have added that as no trials can befall a good man without the over-ruling hand of God's providence, he should endeavor to exercise a spirit of faith, patience, resignation and prayer, whilst he is under them; and that though we are permitted to use means to extricate ourselves out of them, yet we must see to it that they are *lawful* means, and such as are warranted by God's holy will and word.

## II.

The cobbler is censured for saying that the author of *Thelyphthora* explodes all external marriage ceremony as *superstitious priestcraft*.



My reasons for this supposition are grounded upon the author's whole chapter of marriage, the substance and purport of which must be well remembered by those who have read his *Treatise*, and from which it is clear, that though he acknowledges the expediency of an outward recognition of marriage for the purposes of society, yet he lays it down as a certain position that neither contract nor external ceremony are at all necessary (in a religious view) before the parties come together, and that the single act of bodily union is the only true scriptural marriage.

## III.

The cobbler is told by the author of *Thelyphthora*, that “ he meets with no such  
“ cases as that of Lady A— and Sir Tho-  
“ mas A—; nor as that of the humble  
“ petition of *Mary*, the wife of *John Wil-*  
“ *liams*—nor of women of the *St. Giles's*  
“ breed, crying *murders* about the streets,  
“ as the consequences of the *Jewish* sys-  
“ tem.”

This is no reason at all why they would not be very frequent in *England* if Polygamy were established among us. But I am



far from believing that Polygamy was ever much in practice among the *Jews*, and even where it was practised, I doubt not but the mischiefs attending it were in many cases very evident. One thing however is certain, which is, that the cobbler has given the author of *Thelyphthora* a *pinching shoe* by the introduction of the cases before-mentioned, and therefore he affects to treat them with contempt. However, in your next piece, (for I understand we are to have *more last words* of the author of *Thelyphthora*,) I desire you will give me the satisfaction of knowing your sentiments on those cases, particularly on that of king *Charles* the second and *Nell Gwyn*, the duchess of *Portsmouth*, or indeed any other of his mistresses; for upon your plan, I see no more harm of his keeping a dozen than one, provided he were the first man who *became one flesh with them*, and provided he persisted in taking them to his bed one after another as long as he lived. But more particularly still, I beg you will inform the cobbler and the public what you *do* say, or *can* say, in the case proposed in the *Blessings of Polygamy* of a single woman filiating her child before you on a married man. As

a justice of the peace, you are obliged to put the law in force against him.—As a clergyman, you must tell him that he took his own wife in order to cleave *to her alone, forsaking all others.*—But as the author of *Thelyphthora*, I am quite at a loss to know how you would address the parties; especially if the man informed you that his own wife were *barren or ill-tempered.*

I hope also you will not forget to tell us your authority for saying that *Luther* and the other Protestant divines *unanimously declared* in the case of the *Landgrave of Hesse*, that it was *not contrary to the law of God* for a man to take another wife his first being alive [D].

#### IV.

The author of *Thelyphthora* says a man might *maliciously wound* either of these (a

[D] How the author of *Thelyphthora* can possibly think of pressing the Reformers, whether at home or abroad, into his service, is to me most inconceivable, especially after the quotation I brought from *Luther* against the Polygamy of the Anabaptists; and when *Beza* wrote an express treatise against Polygamy, which is noticed by *Calvin* with the highest approbation. As to the sentiments of our *English* Reformers, they may be pretty well known by the marriage service, and the homily against adultery.



wife or a virgin) and not be liable to death, as he would be in the case of *maliciously wounding* cattle.

Here the cobling country justice, must again take the liberty of reminding his friend *learned in the law*, that he is under a very great mistake in this assertion, for by the act commonly called the *Coventry act* (made on account of the maiming Sir *John Coventry*, in the reign of *Charles the second*) *maliciously maiming* or *wounding* any subject is made *death*.

The cases of a rape and of a man having intercourse with a woman by her own free consent, or even seducing [*D*] her, are very different. In the former, the oath of the woman alone may safely be taken, as she can have no interest in swearing against the man; in the latter, a door would necessarily be opened to a thousand frauds and impositions. Therefore, though I agree with you intirely, that every unmarried man who seduces or debauches a virgin ought to make her his wife; yet I also say, that

[*D*] *Query*. Upon the principles of *Thelyphthora*, whether such a thing as *seduction* (any more than fornication) can or ever did exist, since the first intercourse of man with a woman is by him deemed a marriage?



that compulsion upon every accusation of that sort, by the woman's testimony only, (and no other can hardly ever be had) would be attended with very dreadful consequences. However, where such a law could be enforced, it ought to be enforced. And if this were all you had endeavored to prove, your design would certainly have met with general approbation; though instead of three *heavy* volumes, you might have comprized the whole of what you had to say within the compass of three pages, and thereby have saved yourself much time and trouble, have saved your readers the sum of fifteen shillings each, and have saved the cobbler and the monthly and critical reviewers a very tiresome piece of employment.

## V.

You ask me how far from "*implying*" "*approbation*" it is where an action is *permitted*?"—I answer, it is often very far. Will my friend say, that because God *permitted* David's adultery and murder, he therefore *approved* of them? Take heed lest by losing sight of this material distinction, you make God the author of all sin.

Besides,

Besides, give this sentiment its full scope, that God's *permission* and his *approbation* cannot be separated, and it will go near to make the most abominable wickedness the sure road to heaven.

## VI.

I am pressed with the authority of *Wetstein*, Bishop *Burnet* and others, Doctor *Doddridge* himself bringing up the rear.

Now what should you think of the cobbler, if he were to treat them all with the most supercilious disdain, and were to say, "What are all human authorities to me, "if they speak not agreeable to the divine "law and testimony? I no more mind "them, than I mind the *wisdom* of *Plato*, " *Aristotle*, *Cicero*, &c. among the antients; "or of *Sir Isaac Newton*, *Mr. Lock*, Bishop " *Warburton*, or the old woman that sells apples at the corner of the street among the moderns [E]." Suppose again I were to press you with the authority of your favorite *Wetstein*, in order to degrade the divinity of the Son of God [F]. Would you call that authority

[E] *Theol.* vol. ii. conclusion.

[F] This laborious commentator (who was a *Swiss*, and was obliged to leave his own country on account of



authority conclusive? I am persuaded you would not compliment this learned man at the expence of *denying the Lord that bought you*. Suppose I were to produce the exprefs testimony of a thousand learned and pious authors and commentators against Polygamy? What would be your reply? *They have followed one another like sheep.—They speak not agreeable to the divine law.—They set Moses and Christ at variance.—*But if only a single word or sentence can be gathered from any of them that at all favors our author's system; then no praises can be too lavish on their excellent judgment, prodigious piety, or profound learning. O *Thelyphthora, Thelyphthora*, thou mother of inconsistency, where shall I find thee?

*Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo?*

But it is no strange thing to hear men exclaim loudly against human authority, while they are assuming to themselves an

of his Arian principles,) has given us the various readings of the New Testament; but among them all, the word *αλλοτριαν* for *αλλην* is not to be found; therefore this change of the word is intirely on his own judgment; but as it happens to coincide with the plan of our author, he adopts it with as much authority as if it were really part of the sacred text.

authority



authority little less than divine, and at the same time that they are professing to hold the opinions and decisions of all other men in the utmost contempt, are expecting that all other men should pay the most implicit obedience to their own.

It is also a practice more common than decent, for an author to talk of the absurdity of the pope's pretensions to infallibility, and at the very instant that he is doing so, to be putting on the *triple crown*, and thrusting his own *ipse dixit* into the papal chair. Hence it is that the most peremptory *dictators* are usually those who speak most against *dictating*: and whilst they will suffer no human authority, however respectable, to be quoted against them, where it does not coincide with their own sentiments, will yet catch at every thread of testimony they can lay hold on when it makes at all for their side the question.—How is it possible to argue on *fair* ground with such *unfair* players at *bo-peep*? — Produce a cloud of commentators; they are all despised as human authority: produce none, and you are despised yourself for not producing them.

With regard however to Bishop *Burnet*, I think I can give a tolerable good reason for his writing his little tract concerning Polygamy, though what he did was certainly a great blot in his character, if it were only on account of his duplicity.

When the friends of the Protestant interest saw that *Charles* the second was not likely to have any issue by the infanta of *Portugal*, to whom he was married, and that therefore the crown was likely to descend to a popish successor, they began to put every engine at work that the King might have an heir, as *Burnet* himself tells us in *the history of his own time*, vol. i. p. 261. fol. edit. from whence I transcribe *verbatim* what follows :

“ When the party saw they could make  
“ nothing of the business of the Duke of  
“ Monmouth, they tried next by what  
“ methods they could get rid of the  
“ Queen ; that so the King might marry  
“ another wife : For the King had chil-  
“ dren by so many different creatures, that  
“ they hoped for issue, if he had a wife  
“ capable of any. Some thought, the  
“ Queen and he were not legally married :  
“ But the avowing a marriage, and the  
“ living



“ living many years in that state, did cer-  
“ tainly supply any defect in point of  
“ form. Others pretended, she was bar-  
“ ren from a natural cause, and that  
“ seemed equivalent to impotence in men.  
“ But the King often said, he was sure she  
“ had once miscarried. This though not  
“ overthrown by such an evidence, could  
“ never be proved, unless the having no  
“ children was to be concluded a barren-  
“ ness : And the dissolving a marriage on  
“ such an account could neither be justi-  
“ fied in law nor conscience. Other sto-  
“ ries were given out of the Queen’s per-  
“ son, which were false : For I saw in a  
“ letter under the King’s own hand that  
“ the marriage was consummated. *Others*  
“ *talked of Polygamy* : And officious per-  
“ sons were ready to thrust themselves into  
“ any thing that could contribute to their  
“ advancement. Lord *Lauderdale* and  
“ Sir *Robert Murray* asked my opinion of  
“ these things. I said, I knew speculative  
“ people could say a great deal in the way  
“ of argument for *Polygamy*, and divorce :  
“ Yet these things were so decried, that,  
“ they were *rejected by all Christian so-*  
“ *cieties.*”

How

How few men, even good men are there who can totally withstand corrupt influence and court favor! How easy is it to find arguments when we have a secret interest in wishing a thing to be true! Notwithstanding *Burnet* had pronounced Polygamy to be *rejected by all Christian Societies*, yet he afterwards himself stated the case which you have produced, and certainly gave his answer rather in favor of it; still however with great caution, and not without being constrained to own it as a *truth*, “that Polygamy falls short of the  
“intendment of marriage in innocency, to  
“which state, we that are under the gos-  
“pel must return as near as it is possible.”

Upon the whole, Bishop *Burnet*’s testimony amounts to little more than a question in casuistry [G], which he endeavors to solve in the most favorable manner he could to the prevailing court party; but after all does not pretend to speak decisively on the subject; and though it appears from the tract itself, which I have

[G] The question is this: Whether in *any case* Polygamy be *lawful* under the gospel?

How very different from the peremptory and absolute assertion of the author of *Thelyphthora*, that “*Polygamy is lawful in itself.*”

seen



seen in the *British Museum* that he shewed it to Lord *Lauderdale*, who was then high in the King's favor, yet there is no proof at all that the Bishop made it public himself, or that it was ever printed by his own approbation.

But who could have expected that good *Doctor Doddridge* should ever have been called upon as a Coadjutor to Polygamy, in his note on 1 *Tim.* iii. 2. where he first gives the sentiments of Mr. *Hallet* and Mr. *Whiston* on the text, and then mentions his own, by which he is so far from approving Polygamy, that he calls it an *irregular practice*, to which the *divine wisdom* had fixed a brand of infamy. However, if we have a mind to know exactly what was this excellent man's opinion of Polygamy, we have only to consult his paraphrase on 1 *Cor.* vii. &c. where he has the following remarkable words :

“ As the God of nature has for certain  
 “ wise reasons implanted in the sexes a  
 “ mutual inclination to each other, in or-  
 “ der to prevent Fornication, and every  
 “ other species of uncleanness, let every  
 “ man have and retain his own proper  
 “ wife ; and let every woman have and re-  
 “ tain

“tain her own husband : for neither divorce nor Polygamy, are by any means agreeable to the genius of the gospel.

“Again, The wife hath not power over her own body, but hath by the marriage covenant transferred it to the husband ; and in like manner also *the husband hath not power over his own body*, but it is as it were **THE PROPERTY OF HIS WIFE.**

In the *improvement* of this chapter *Doct<sup>r</sup> Doddridge* makes the following judicious observation :

“It becomes us humbly to adore the divine wisdom and goodness manifested in the formation of the first human pair, and in keeping up the different sexes through all succeeding ages, in so just a proportion, that *every man might have his own wife, and every woman her own husband.*

Methinks after these conclusive testimonies from *Doct<sup>r</sup> Doddridge*, my friend's attempt to prove him an abettor of Polygamy is something like that of the Irishman who said “ he was sure there was a dead man in the ditch, for he heard him groan.”



Had the author of *Thelyphthora* been satisfied with the decision of this sound and learned protestant Divine on the text, we should not have found him stooping so very low as to ask instruction from the pope, or rather from a nest of Jesuits, by adopting the sense of the *Rhemish* testament on the passage before us, and then by way of mending the matter adding

—— *Fas est et ab hoste doceri.*

When he might with much more propriety have exclaimed

*Flectere si nequeo superos acheronta movebo.*

But the cobbler cannot take leave of this important scripture without once more commencing critic; and as he is threatened with a future drubbing for his ignorance and blunders in the explanation of this chapter, he will e'en try his hand once more; that if the author of *Thelyphthora* has any more discipline to bestow upon him, he may give it him all at once.

Upon revising what I said in the *Blessings of Polygamy*, p. 61, 62, 63. I find I have omitted to take notice of a very glaring piece of partiality, which my friend  
has

has fallen into in his translation of that same word  $\epsilon\chi\epsilon\omega$  which has already occasioned so much altercation: for in the very same verse where it relates to the man, he renders it, Let him *retain* his wife. But where it relates to the woman he renders it, Let her *keep to* her husband. His reason for making this wide difference of sense in the very same word, and in the very same verse is very evident. But though neither of the expressions are so just as that which our translators have given us, yet I will readily leave it to your choice to take the word *retain* or *keep to* which ever you please. If you choose the first, and translate the one part of the verse, *Let the husband retain his wife*, then you must translate the other part, *Let the wife retain her husband*: And there's an end of Polygamy that way.

But if you had rather take the other expression, *Let the wife keep to her husband*, then you must also (as observed in *the Blessings of Polygamy*) render the latter clause *Let the husband keep to his wife*. In short choose which expression you will, only abide by it; but without the most shameful abuse of the word of God, you



cannot give a different sense to the repetition of the same word in the same verse.

But as my learned friend by his elucidation of this chapter leaves the matter open to the whole church of Corinth to practice Polygamy without any *limitation* or *restriction* whatever, we may suppose in order to make him consistent with himself, that he has found out by some ancient manuscript or tradition, that all the married women whose husbands were members of that church were either *barren*, or *lunatics*, or *scolds*.

The cobbler has nothing more to say in the way of criticism himself, but begs to apply to the learned author of *Thelyphthora* for information whether the text in *Mal. ii.* which our translators have rendered in the singular number “*thee and the wife of thy youth*,” be really so in the original ; or whether the words stand in the Hebrew as given us in *Thelyphthora*, *You and your wives*? I am sure if our translators have rendered the words in the singular number, when they ought to have been in the plural, they have shewn themselves to be very incorrect, though they have thereby made the text speak strongly in favor of monogamy :

gamy : but if your translation be the true one, then I confess there is an ambiguity in the phraseology ; and that though *thee and thy wife* can mean only two persons or *they twain*, yet *you and your wives* leaves the matter so much at large, that it may take in one man with half a dozen wives. Your explicit answer to this question will really much oblige me, as I assure you I have asked no person but yourself, whether you or the translators of the Bible are right.

## VII.

The author of *Thelyphthora* totally misrepresents what the cobbler called “ *low chicanery*.” The expression alluded to was the following : “ That if by a woman in the text (Matt. v. 28.) *any woman* be meant, then a man may commit adultery *by looking at his own wife*.” This you have intirely passed over, and instead of it you affirm that I charge you with *chicanery*, for saying that the word adultery is never used but where the defilement of a married woman is concerned [F].

## VIII.

[F] If this assertion contain sound divinity, then fornication as well as adultery is not forbidden by



## VIII.

The author desires me to ask myself if I did not read his book with prejudice. “Did not your prejudices (says he) incline you to wish that they might rather be justified than removed?”—I answer sincerely, that notwithstanding the strong prepossessions I had in favor of the author, yet I *had* imbibed very strong prejudices against his performance before I read it. These prejudices I attribute in great measure to some letters I had read, which were written by one *Paul of Tarsus* on the other side of the question, and when I came to read your book, I really thought he was more than a match for you.

## IX.

Though it seemed by our author's sentiments as contained in the two first volumes of *Thelyphthora*, that no such thing as fornication could exist, yet he now tells us there is such an animal in the world as a whore, and gives us a most wonderful

the seventh commandment, and if not by that commandment, then by no other, and consequently can be no sin; for *where no law is, there is no transgression.*

account

account of this creature in the following words :

“ If this woman” (who has intercourse with one man and is therefore according to our author, the wife of that man by the divine law) “ departs from this *first* man “ to another, the bond with the first is “ totally vacated by her act of adultery; so “ that the first man is totally released from “ her. If afterwards she goes from man “ to man, and sells or gives her favors promiscuously to all alike, she is every “ bodys : no man can lay claim to her, “ or look upon her as his *property*, or be “ injured as a given appropriated husband “ might be, by her infidelity. She is in “ short, *nullius in ter bona*, and is an whore, “ harlot or prostitute, in the true sense of “ these words.”

From this very extraordinary definition it appears,

1st. That no unmarried woman (i. e. according to our author's ideas of marriage) can be a whore.

2dly. That no woman whatever can commit whoredom till she has first committed adultery.



3dly. That she can be guilty of no whoredom till *three* men have had connection with her.

4thly. That as fornication is a less sin than adultery, consequently the third man who has intercourse with her is less guilty than the second.

5thly. That from the moment she has bestowed her favors on the third man, she ceases to be an adultress.

6thly. That if an action be brought by the husband for *crim. con.* with any man but the second, it must be laid for committing *whoredom* with his wife, and not for committing *adultery*.

That these are conclusions necessarily deducible from our author's definition and premises is clear at first view: but without animadverting upon them, let me ask how agrees this doctrine with scripture? There we find, *Deut. xxii. 13, 14, &c. &c.* that if suspicion arose in the husband concerning his new married wife that she was not a maid, and if the *tokens of her virginity* could not be produced, she was adjudged to have *played the whore*. So by the Levitical law, *Lev. xxi. 7.* no priest was to *take a wife that was a whore*. By  
which

which it is evident that according to God's judgment, though not according to the judgment of the author of *Thelyphthora*, a woman might be a whore first and a wife afterwards. With him it is just *vice versa*.

Truly, my friend, you are very kind to propose to me the leaving off *tea*, that my ideas may not be *disordered* by *frightful dreams*; but such seems to be the confusion of your own ideas, that I would advise you to take an additional quantity of *coffee*, which I have heard is sometimes effectual towards dissipating the fumes of the imagination: Well indeed may you tell me that you are "perfectly convinced that I have scarcely one real idea of the book I write against," when the writer himself has scarcely one fixed idea of the subject he handles. And this perhaps is the true cause why you complain that your book is so generally misunderstood.

## X.

The author of *Thelyphthora* seems to lay a great stress on the law of marrying the brother's wife: and where the surviving brother had no wife nor children of his own, there it was God's positive command  
that



that he should do so : but I no more believe that he ordained this as a general law where the next brother was already married, than I believe he commanded the widow and the wife to be married together. *Josephus's* testimony must in this case be conclusive, and the quotation which you yourself bring from him, *Antiq. lib. ix. chap. 5.* is full against you, for there he asserts that *Mablon's* kinsman refused to marry *Ruth*, saying, “*he had already a wife and children.*”——But our author adds, “*not a word that it was unlawful.*” But does not the very answer he returned imply this?—However, the author easily gets over the matter in his usual way, by affirming on the greatest of all authorities, *viz.* his own, that *Josephus* does not represent the matter as the Bible does. *Thel. vol. i. p. 253.* However, if the author would establish his point, let him produce only one example of the next brother marrying the widow of the deceased brother, when he himself was a married man.—But I will go farther still.—Even supposing that in this particular instance God himself had commanded that the brother of the deceased, though a married man, should yet espouse

espouse the widow; still this would be no more proof that God approved of general Polygamy, than it would be that he approved of general incest, which marrying a brother's wife was deemed to be, and was forbidden as such under the Levitical law.

## XI.

You are pleased to say you feel both hurt and ashamed at my strictures on the story of *Judah* and *Tamar*. Certainly the cobbler ought to be much obliged to you for this great sensibility on his behalf; but as he has taken the very words of the sacred text, and he thinks also the sense of it, he hopes you will make yourself quite easy on his account; especially as he does not find that any other person besides the author of *Thelyphtora* thinks he has given any wrong interpretation of the passage; not to mention that this author has expressed himself in such a manner on the place in question that few, if any, of his readers have been able to understand him.

## XII.

I leave it to you and Doctor *Kennicot* to settle the matter about the word *not*.

## XIII.



## XIII.

That *Jael* acted as a faithful subject of the *Israelitish* state, I don't deny: but that she also *acted under the immediate direction of God*, is as clear as that the sun shines at noon-day. Read the fourth and fifth chapters of *Judges* throughout, also *Psalms* lxxxiii. 9. where the act of *Jael* to *Sisera* is spoken of as the direct act of God. It is true, this matter does not affect the present controversy either one way or other; but it is grievous to see the divine testimony so little regarded by one who certainly ought to have more respect for it.

## XIV.

The cobbler is challenged to find as strong a prohibition of Polygamy, on the man's side, as that *Rom.* vii. 1, 2, 3. on the woman's side.

To bring that passage is meer trifling. It is plain that the apostle is there introducing the law as a husband, to whom we are all espoused by nature; and Christ as a husband, to whom all believers are espoused by grace: therefore the grand and only point he meant to prove was, that a believer had no more to do with an abrogated

gated law as a covenant of works, than a widow who was married again has to do with her first husband when he is dead and buried. If therefore *St. Paul* had in this place shewn that it was equally criminal in a man to have more wives than one, as it was in a woman to have more husbands than one (though the one were as much a truth as the other,) it would have been quite foreign to his own purpose. But when our blessed Saviour is confining himself wholly to the matters of adultery and divorce, there he expressly gives us to understand that it is equally criminal in the man to put away his wife and marry another, as it is in the wife to put away her husband and marry another. *He saith unto them, Whoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery,* Mark x. 11, 12.

## XV.

The author of *Thelyphthora* again challenges the cobbler in a very peremptory manner, to produce one instance of the divine *prohibition* or *disapprobation* of Polygamy. And then



then tells us, (perhaps rather too much in a way of triumph) that if I do so, *I shall have the Old Testament on my side.*

The cobbler answers the challenge; *first*, by producing that remarkable text, *Deut. xvii. 17.* where God tells the *Israelites*, that when they were come into the land which he should give them, the king which he would choose for them *should not multiply wives unto himself, that his heart turn not away.*—Here is,

1st, *Absolute prohibition; he shall not multiply wives or have many wives*, which is the express meaning of the word Polygamy.

2dly, *Disapprobation*, and the reason of it, lest Polygamy, or the *multiplying wives*, should *turn away his heart from God.*

But that the interpretation of this important text of scripture may not rest on my own decision, I shall back it with a testimony, which, to an unprejudiced mind, must carry with it full conviction: and this shall be from a comment on the Bible, which was set forth (as ordered by the committee for religion) by a considerable number of those sound, learned, and evangelical divines which composed the Westminster Assembly, and before publication submitted

submitted to the perusal and correction of them all together, as is expressed in the preface to the work itself; and therefore must be regarded not as the judgment of a single individual, or of one commentator, but as conveying the sense of a large body of the greatest, ablest, and best men that perhaps ever composed any synod since the days of the apostles.

These faithful and orthodox divines thus express themselves on the text in question:

“ If kings may not [*i. e. multiply wives*]  
 “ much less their subjects, since it is of  
 “ more moment that they have children  
 “ than inferior persons; and though the  
 “ patriarchs had more wives than one at  
 “ once, it was not according to the first  
 “ institution of marriage. [*See annot. on*  
 “ *Gen. iv. 19.*] It was never allowed by  
 “ God, though for a time *tolerated*, upon  
 “ reasons which concern not our times.  
 “ And this might be rather *forbidden* to a  
 “ king, because of the power of his ex-  
 “ ample upon the manners of his people.”

Suffer me to bring one more text of scripture, which though quoted in the *Blessings of Polygamy*, is not of less weight on that account.—The passage alluded to,  
 is



is that *Lev. xviii. 18. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, (or as it stands in the margin, one wife to another) to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.*

I know you will not allow the marginal reading to be the true sense of the words, and may perhaps tell me, as you do upon another occasion, that “*I have not called in a single commentator, historian, or other author to my aid.*” However, I will now call in the corroborating testimony of one of the most judicious and unexceptionable men that ever lived in my behalf. Good old *Mr. Perkins*, who certainly shone among the brightest stars which adorned the church of *England* during the reign of *Queen Elizabeth*, and who for piety, learning, and deep skill in casuistry, was equalled by few, exceeded by none. This able and sound divine, treating on the text in question, thus writes,

“ This place is a flat prohibition of *the*  
 “ *sin of Polygamy*: for to take a wife to  
 “ her sister, in the *Hebrew* phrase, is no-  
 “ thing else but to take two wives one to  
 “ another. The like form of speech is used  
 “ elsewhere by *Moses*, as *Exod. xxvi. 3.*  
 “ Five

“ Five curtains shall be coupled together  
 “ (the woman to her sister,) that is, one  
 “ to another; and the other five curtains  
 “ shall be coupled (the woman to her sis-  
 “ ter) that is, the one to the other. *Ezek.*  
 “ i. 9. The four beasts were joined with  
 “ their wings (the woman to her sister,)   
 “ that is, the one to the other. Again,  
 “ *Moses* himself there alledgeth two reasons  
 “ against Polygamy: the one is, because  
 “ the man is to love, cherish, and com-  
 “ fort his wife; whereas, if he should take  
 “ unto him another besides her, he should  
 “ greatly vex his first lawful wife. The  
 “ other, because by that means he should  
 “ uncover the shame of his wife; that is,  
 “ he should play a very dishonest part with  
 “ her, to whom he was before lawfully  
 “ married.” *Perkins on Christian Oeconomy*  
*or Household Government*, vol. iii. p. 677.

The very same interpretation which Mr. *Perkins* gives, do the Assembly of Divines also give of this scripture in their comment before quoted. The following are their own words. “ This is not to be under-  
 “ stood only of another natural sister, as  
 “ if a man might have two wives, so they  
 “ were not such sisters, or two sisters one  
 “ after



“ after another to wife, the latter upon  
 “ the death of the former, for the mar-  
 “ riage of the brother's wife is forbidden  
 “ before, *ver.* 16. and by consequence a  
 “ woman must not marry her sister's hus-  
 “ band, and so two sisters are already for-  
 “ bidden to be married to one man.—  
 “ Wherefore it is most probable, that this  
 “ is a prohibition of Polygamy, *i. e.* of  
 “ having more wives than one at once;  
 “ that one may not be a vexation to the  
 “ other, which is likely to fall out not  
 “ only betwixt natural sisters, as *Leah* and  
 “ *Rachel*, but betwixt those that are not  
 “ of kin, as betwixt *Hannab* and *Penin-*  
 “ *nab*. And for the word *sister* in a ge-  
 “ neral acceptation, it may be applied to  
 “ *any woman*, as the word *brother* to *any*  
 “ *man*. Gen. xix. 7. And it is to be noted,  
 “ that it is sometimes to be applied to  
 “ things, which, in propriety of speech,  
 “ come not under such a title or denomi-  
 “ nation, as the wings of the beast, *Ezek.*  
 “ i. 9. are said to touch *a woman to her*  
 “ *sister*, as the Hebrew phrase carrieth it.”

Now what says my friend to these authorities? I dare say he will not scruple to affirm that they are not worth minding. But

what if Mr. *Perkins* and the Assembly of Divines had spoken the language of *Thelyphthora*? Then what high encomiums would they have received! Truly, we may see that throughout life, *the traveller who blowed hot and cold with the same mouth*, is no uncommon character.

## XVI.

The cobbler is accused of *attacking his own old friend*, and is put in mind of the apostle's advice, 1 *Thess.* iv. 11. *Study to be quiet.*

It is easy to give advice, hard to follow it ourselves. I grant however, that the above apostolic counsel may be more suited to the cobbler as a layman, than to the author of *Thelyphthora* as a minister; as that author must well remember a conversation some years ago between two certain clergymen, when the one told the other “he intended *to leave off preaching and be quiet.*” “*Ah, Sir,* (answered the other) *the devil loves quiet ministers.*”

As to attacking his friend, this charge the cobbler denies. It is true he attacked the errors of his friend, but the person of his friend he endeavored to treat with re-

D

spect,



spect, love, and regard. He wishes the author of *Thelyphthora* had observed the same rule.

## XVII.

The author of *Thelyphthora* accuses the cobbler of setting forth “the fair sex in such  
“ a light of vengeance and assassination, and  
“ in short, as such a set of furies, as to out-  
“ do, if possible, the three famed daugh-  
“ ters of *Acheron* and *Nox*.” He then advises the cobbler “to put some snakes into  
“ their hair in the next edition, and then  
“ they may pass for the lineal descendants  
“ of *Alecto*, *Megæra*, and *Tisiphone*.” He then adds, “I marvel not that my friend  
“ has still to complain with *Horace*.

“*Martiis cælebs quid agam calendis?*”

Ah! my good friend, 'tis too late to offer the ladies *sugar-plums*, when you have been pelting them with *bailstones* and *coals of fire*; and placing them in a light little superior to slaves in a *Turkish* seraglio. But the cobbler has no cause to dread their displeasure for any thing that he has said, concerning the tenderness and delicacy of their feelings in his late piece, or of the effects

effects of that universal jealousy which the doctrine contained in *Thelyphthora* will certainly spread among them. The injured sex cannot yet have forgotten—but, *manet alta mente repostum*—a certain note concerning *queen Vashti*, which most of them have adjudged far more proper to have come from an *eastern bashaw* than a *christian divine*. However, the cobbler has still too much regard for his *old friend*, (notwithstanding his severe personal reflection, couched under the line from *Horace*,) either to lend the females his *strap*, or to *put snakes into their heads*; being certain that the first object of their vengeance would be the devoted author of *Thelyphthora*. But if that author has a mind to view some of the *blessed effects* of his own system when established by law, let him look at the windows of our picture-shops, and there he will be entertained with a print of two women belaboring a poor hen-pecked man, and under it, as nearly as I can recollect, the following words: *Polygamy in perfection, or Doctor Madman brought to the right use of his senses.*

But if the author of *Thelyphthora* has any meaning at all in bringing the above line



from *Horace*, (the introduction of which is deemed, even by his best friends, to be a masterpiece of insolence and rudeness,) it must be the following—"Mr. *Hill* has used "the female sex so ill, that no wonder "none of them will marry him."—But as it is true on the one side, that

*There swims no goose so grey, but soon or late,  
Can find some honest gander for her mate,*

So it is equally true on the other, that

*There is no Jack but may have his Gill;*

In proof of which I should be very unwilling to produce the author of *Thelyphthora*. However, I had much rather be lamenting with *Horace*—

*"Martius cœlebs quid agam calendis,"*

Than to be joining the cry of every old lecher and battered rake in the kingdom, upon the prospect of Polygamy being established by law,

*O mihi preteritos referet si Jupiter annos!*

I am sure if I had no higher estimation of the marriage state than what I could form upon reading *Thelyphthora*, I had much rather continue a bachelor all my life,  
than

than harbor a thought of entering into it. But so far am I from thinking that any thing I have advanced in the *Blessings of Polygamy* may be the means of incurring the disapprobation of the sex, that I am flattering myself that however much reason I may have had to *lament* my having hitherto lived single, yet (though not quite in the prime of life) I may now find a favorable reception from some kind and amiable help meet. But happy indeed may the author of *Thelyphthora* esteem himself that he made the marriage-knot sure before he acquainted the world with his ideas of Polygamy, otherwise I think the poet's lamentation for the *calends of March* must have been his all his life long [G].

I have only to add, that if my friend wants a motto for his next publication, instead of going to *St. Paul* for it, I would advise him to have recourse to the *celestial brilliancy* of DOCTOR GRAHAM himself, and to take the conspicuous words

[G] Even this line of *Horace* shews, that the heathen nations supposed that some external form was necessary before marriage, otherwise this lascivious poet would hardly have stiled himself *cœlebs*, a bachelor, as it is to be feared he had been frequently *married*, according to the *Thelyphthorian* system.



which are painted on the outside of his house in *Pall-Mall*,

“ SACRED TO HYMEN.”

Especially as the electrical, hymeneal beds, on which the doctor advertises to *touch so delicately*, may prove very convenient for the accommodation of an additional wife now and then : For as to the ladies living together under the same roof, I think it must be quite given up, since we can hardly suppose there would subsist a sufficient degree of harmony between them, even to put them on a footing with *Bayes's* two kings of *Brentford*, who came in *smelling at the same nosegay* [H].

I must here beg leave to observe, that *Doctor Graham* as well as the author of a *Treatise on Female Ruin*, complains that the design of his *celestial bed* is much *misunderstood* through *ignorance and prejudice*, and assures the public, in the exact language of *Thelyphthora*, that this same electrical *torus* is by no means intended to be used in an *unlimited indiscriminate* manner, but is re-

[H] Preface to the third vol. of *Thel.* p. 8. note.

served “ ONLY FOR MARRIED PERSONS,” that he has nothing in view but to promote the public good, to prevent *impurity, adultery, and divorce*, and to encourage *population* in many *noble and illustrious families*, which are now without heirs to inherit their titles and estates, and therefore he assures himself of the *patronage and approbation* of the great, the *learned*, and THE GOOD; and hopes for that *benevolence and encouragement* from THE LEGISLATURE *which the vast importance of the object merits.*” —The Doctor then adds the following *nota bene*.

✎ IN order to deter the wantonly lascivious, the mere votaries of pleasure from polluting the TEMPLE OF HYMEN, the following lines are written in golden capitals over the grand entrance.

ΟΥΔΕΙΣ ΑΚΑΘΑΡΤΟΣ ΕΙΣΙΤΩ!

*Procul! O Procul este profani. VIRG.*

Keep afar off ye profane ones!

See *Doctor Graham's Abstract*, &c. given at the door to such as attend his electrical experiments, and compare it with *Thelyphthora*.

But



But notwithstanding the grave *procul este profani* of the *medico-electrical Doctor* and the pious admonitions of the author of *The-lyphthora* to a *holy and sober use* of Polygamy, and to avoid an *excess* of it ; notwithstanding the joint assurances of these two adventurous personages that their highly extolled nostrums of *Polygamy* and *hymeneal electricity* are only meant to promote the welfare of the community in general, as well as the happiness of private families in particular, to put a stop to divorce, adultery, &c. and to encourage population, by furnishing heirs to titles and estates ;—yet, certain curious persons who regard not the apostles advice, of being *quiet and minding their own business*, but must needs take a peep *behind the curtain*, have been hardy enough to try to persuade the world that other ends of a very different nature are likely to be answered by the systems delivered to the world both by the one and the other of these learned gentlemen.

TO CONCLUDE :

I am told by the author of *Thelyphthora*, that “*forbearance is no acquittance*,” (great *forbearance* truly,) and that the light in which he shall find himself obliged, in justice to the public (to say nothing of *Thelyphthora*,) to place me as a *critic* and a *philologist*, will hardly be more disagreeable to myself than to the *author*. Then he adds, “*but be it remembered*, Sir, (a conviction already drawn up in the law phrase,) [I]

[I] We may suppose the whole of the conviction to run as follows :

|                              |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| County of<br>S—y.<br>To wit. | } | BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the<br><i>twenty-third day of March</i> last past, and in<br>the twenty-first year of the reign of his<br>sovereign majesty lord George, of Great-Britain,<br>France, and Ireland, king defender of the faith, and so<br>forth. <i>Richard Hill</i> , of <i>Hawkstone</i> , in the county of <i>Salop</i> ,<br><i>batchelor</i> , otherwise <i>cobler</i> , was duly convicted before<br>me, <i>Martinus Scriblerus</i> , Esq. one of his majesty’s jus-<br>tices assigned to keep the peace within the said county, of<br>divers crimes and misdemeanors in the art of <i>criticism</i> and<br><i>philology</i> , he the said <i>Richard Hill</i> , otherwise the <i>cobler</i> ,<br>not being duly qualified nor licensed by the laws of<br><i>Thelyphthora</i> to exercise the art or mystery of <i>criticism</i> or<br><i>philology</i> aforesaid. I therefore the said justice, upon<br>due consideration had of the premises, do adjudge that<br>the said <i>Richard Hill</i> , otherwise the <i>cobler</i> , hath in-<br>curred the penalty of <i>public whipping</i> , which said<br>penalty, I the within named justice shall inflict on<br>the said delinquent by my own hand and rod, within<br>the space of three months next ensuing from the date<br>hereof. Given under my hand and seal, the day and<br>year aforesaid, |
|------------------------------|---|---|

MARTINUS SCRIBLERUS.

that



that happen what may, you have nobody to thank but yourself." In short, the cobbler has lamed the author's *hobby horse*, and has sent him limping and wincing away, and therefore in return he is resolved that the *hobby horse* shall kick the cobbler's *brains out*. But, *parce minis, magne sacerdos*. Please to recollect, that to *forbear threatening*, is an apostolic injunction. Let me also put you in mind, that though the cobbler in this piece has administered a little moderate correction by *leathering*, yet the *awl*, the *hammer*, the *pinchers*, and the *paring-knife*, have not yet been taken up in his defence; and these are dangerous weapons to fall under.

Though the cobbler would wish to maintain the spirit of a *Christian*, yet he is not exempt from the feelings of a *man*: therefore, though he will not say

*Nemo me impune lacessit,*

Yet he begs leave to let you know that there are a few lines in the satires of *Horace* which, upon some occasions, may be more applicable to him than he himself would wish in his cooler moments.

— Ut pereat rubigine telum  
Nec quisquam noceat, cupido mihi pacis, at ille  
Qui me commorit, melius non tangere clamo  
Flebit, &c. &c.

Peace is my dear delight, not *Fleury's* more,  
Yet touch me and no minister so sore. POPE.

But after all I am fully persuaded that, as two separate individuals, this controversy is not likely to do either you or me any good in a spiritual way, though I esteemed it absolute matter of duty in me, to enter my protest against the unscriptural doctrine and dangerous tendency of *Thelyphthora*. Having done this in two publications, I shall be happy to say with regard to all controversy,

*Hic . . . . cæstus artemque repono,*

But whether I am to add the other word (*victor*) or to turn it into *victus*, I must leave others to determine. One thing however is certain, that every day our pens are exercised in *vain janglings* and *disputings*, we have reason to lament with one of old, when a day passed over his head without his having done any good, “*Perdidimus diem.*” God grant we may neither of us have cause to cry out with another

“*Heu! vitam perdidisti operose nihil agendo.*”

Or



Or with a third great man of modern memory, who had just strength enough to say at the last gasp, "*The battle is fought, but the victory is lost for ever.*"

N. B. The cobbler finds some queries prefixed to the second edition of *Thelyphthora*; but as many of them consist in *begging* the question, as others of them are *beside* the question, and as the objections contained in most of them are considered and answered in the *Blessings of Polygamy*, therefore the cobbler will not animadvert on them particularly.—Besides, it is rumored about that these queries were *borrowed* by the author of *Thelyphthora*.

Postscript.

---

---

## Postscript.

SINCE I wrote the foregoing letter I have looked again into your Preface to the third volume, where I find an extract of a letter from a *reverend and learned correspondent* of your's in favor of it. You have not indeed told us by whom the letter itself was written, but as I really believe there is only one reverend and learned Divine in all England (and I do allow him to be a truly upright and valuable man,) who *now* approves your book, though several others were at first staggered by its plausibility, I could venture to name the person without mistake, as certainly as I could have determined who was meant by the author of *Thelyphthora* though his Treatise were anonymous. However if epistolary testimonies must be admitted on the one side, they certainly may on the other:



other : And as I dare say you will think I cannot follow a better example than your own, permit me to cite a few passages from some letters which I have now in my pocket on the subject. The first shall be an extract from one minister to another, with a sight of which I have lately been favored.

“ I hope you are going on with zeal,  
 “ comfort and success in the blessed work  
 “ of an evangelist—make full proof of  
 “ your ministry—the days are evil, the  
 “ love of many is waxed cold—some have  
 “ brought in damnable errors—others  
 “ turn the grace of God into lascivious-  
 “ ness, and some have discovered the *ad-*  
 “ *vantage and privilege of Polygamy in the*  
 “ *new Testament !!!*

“ The reasoning, sophistry, chicanery,  
 “ fallacy and poison of that book at first  
 “ appear plausible and insinuating, but  
 “ the charm presently vanishes, the purity  
 “ of the gospel shines through every at-  
 “ tempt to sully its brightness—and we  
 “ discover the cloven foot of this angel of  
 “ light—and as a discerning minister ex-  
 “ pressed it, pronounce the book to be  
 “ *Satan's plea, for a libidinous appetite.*”

The

The second shall be from a joint friend of your's and mine, a gentleman of known learning and true religion, which I only received last night.

“ We have perused with great pleasure  
“ *The Blessings of Polygamy*,” thinking  
“ the arguments conclusive, and admiring  
“ the spirit in which it is written. To  
“ tell you the truth the only fault we find  
“ with it is that we think you are too lavish in your encomiums upon the author of *Thelyphthora*. And we are  
“ sorry to see that they have so little effect,  
“ by observing that he advertises a 3d vol.  
“ with a letter to you. I shall be curious  
“ to see what he has to say in reply.”

The third shall be from a very worthy and learned friend of mine, who I hope will pardon the liberty I take in printing his letter (never designed for public view) without his knowledge; but as I am indebted to him for that judicious quotation from *Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, which is contained in it, I think it much more honest to tell the world from whence I had it, than to let them suppose, I had collected it in the course of my own reading.

“ DEAR



“ DEAR SIR,

“ I should have acknowledged the receipt  
“ of *The Blessings of Polygamy displayed* sooner;  
“ but I was informed that you was gone  
“ out of town ; and I did not hear of your  
“ return till Wednesday last. I have read  
“ it with great satisfaction ; and, as an in-  
“ dividual, have reason to say, that God  
“ has made this unhappy controversy about  
“ Polygamy (like some others) a means of  
“ information and settlement to my mind.  
“ Long before I heard of Mr. M——’s book  
“ I had been puzzled as to this point ; and  
“ the reading of *Thelyphthora* almost per-  
“ suaded me to embrace the unchristian doc-  
“ trine. However, at present I am satisfied  
“ that, as a doctrine, it is inconsistent with  
“ the New Testament ; and, when practised,  
“ full of the most dreadful consequences.  
“ For my satisfaction in this important mat-  
“ ter, I am indebted to many, but especially  
“ to you, Sir, as an author, and to my dear  
“ friend Mr. N— as a bosom companion.

“ I have not read much of Mr. M——’s  
“ reply to your address, but, from what I  
“ did read, am sorry to see him so much  
“ and so unjustly out of temper with you.  
“ As to his threatening to expose you as a  
“ critic,

“ critic, (so far as I am capable of judging)  
 “ you have no cause to fear him.

“ Should you send out another edition,  
 “ the following quotation may perhaps  
 “ strengthen what you say at *p.* 66, 67.

“ I esteem it very material to observe by  
 “ the bye this emphasis of the word *ιδιος*,  
 “ for apprehending the force of a text of  
 “ *St. Paul* against the Polygamists. These  
 “ men presume to say, that there is no  
 “ prohibition in the New Testament of  
 “ the plurality of wives to one man. *St.*  
 “ *Paul* 1 *Cor.* vii. 1, 2. persuades people,  
 “ if they can be so content, to an absolute  
 “ continence; but if they cannot, he al-  
 “ lows marriage: but with this limitation  
 “ *εκάστος την εαυτου γυναικα εχετω, και εκαση τον ιδιον*  
 “ *ανδρα εχετω.* The true translation of  
 “ which words is, *Let every man have his*  
 “ *own wife, and let every woman have a hus-*  
 “ *band peculiar to her.*—For as when *Aris-*  
 “ *totle* says *ιδιον τετο τοις ανθρωποις*: It were a  
 “ very imperfect rendering to translate it;  
 “ *men have this of their own*: which ought  
 “ to be, *this is proper, or peculiar, to men.*  
 “ And where he says, *ο δε Βατραχος ιδιον εχει*  
 “ *την γλωσσαν*; to say, *Frogs make their own*



“ noise, would not reach the sense : which  
 “ is, that *Frogs make a noise peculiar to*  
 “ *themselves*. So it is an imperfect trans-  
 “ lation of the foresaid words of the apo-  
 “ stle, which our English gives, *Let every*  
 “ *woman have her own husband*. The word  
 “ signifies, *one peculiar to her*.”

That the Lord Jesus may keep you, and  
 cause you to shine more and more unto  
 the perfect day is the sincere desire of

Dear SIR,

Your very affectionate friend,

And obliged humble servant,

\* \* \*

P. S. The proper force of the word *ιδιος*,  
 as opposed to *κοινος*, may also be seen, Acts  
 iv. 32. και εδεις τι των υπαρχοντων αυτω ελεγεν ιδιον  
 εστιν, αλλ' ην αυτοις απαντα κοινα.

I conclude the whole of these epistolary  
 testimonies (though I could produce a  
 great many more) with one which con-  
 tains a practical comment on our author's  
 doctrine. I have transcribed it from a  
 letter written by a laborious minister of  
 the

the Church of England to another clergyman, who lately inclosed it to me. Speaking of the pernicious effects of *Thelyphthora* in various places, he goes on as follows :

“ There was an instance of this, a few  
“ weeks ago, at L——l. A man amongst  
“ the Independents there, who had a wife  
“ and five children, upon the strength of  
“ Mr. ——’s authority, prevailed upon a  
“ widow (who kept a public house, and  
“ had also five children by her late husband) to believe that Polygamy was lawful. She was weak enough to receive  
“ him, his wife and five children into her  
“ house; his wife was foolish enough to  
“ go with him: they lived for a time apparently comfortably together; the women sat on each side him at table, and  
“ when customers came in they served  
“ them by turns. The widow (as might  
“ be expected) proved with child, and  
“ when her friends attempted to part them,  
“ and argued with the man upon the  
“ wickedness of his conduct (with Mr.  
“ ——’s book in his hand,) he defended  
“ himself against all they could say. Thus  
“ you see “ *The Blessings of Polygamy* begin  
“ to



“ to be *displayed*, but what must the au-  
“ thor of such an abominable perform-  
“ ance think of himself, when such con-  
“ sequences ensue?”

I imagine that, by this time, the author of *Thelyphthora* has seen as many extracts from letters as he wishes to read, and am also afraid that my *Supplement* to the “*Blessings of Polygamy*” will, if I add any more, be like the *Supplement* to *Chambers's Dictionary*, more bulky than the work itself; I therefore beg to subscribe myself,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Still your sincere friend,

And well-wisher,

The COBLER.

F I N I S.

*The following Extract of a Letter having been received since the whole of my Pamphlet was printed off, and stitched up, I am obliged to place it where it stands.*

MY DEAR SIR,

“ I Have just finished the reading of Mr.  
 “ M——’s *third* dry volume on his favorite  
 “ topic. His letter to you, Sir, which concludes  
 “ this dull, tedious compilation from popish  
 “ councils, synods, fathers, &c. gave me not a  
 “ little concern; not upon your account, but his.  
 “ The very respectful and friendly style with  
 “ which you accosted him through your whole  
 “ book, when compared with the unceremonious,  
 “ peevish, and sneering dialect which disgraces his  
 “ performance, must exhibit a contrast very  
 “ much to Mr. M’s disadvantage, in the eye of  
 “ every man of candor and good breeding. In-  
 “ deed, Sir, I feared, upon the first perusal of  
 “ your book, that you had rather exceeded in  
 “ the declarations of your friendship and respect  
 “ for this reverend Polygamist; and the event  
 “ hath at least proved, that Mr. M. was unpre-  
 “ pared for *such* an address. His reflections, in  
 “ some parts, are grossly *personal*, both when he  
 “ speaks in plain English, and when he wraps  
 “ up the obnoxious sentiment in learned scraps,  
 “ (*patches*, Horace would call them) of Latin.  
 “ Some of his *notes* are puerile and nugatory to  
 “ the last degree, and carry with them such an  
 “ appearance of consummate pedantry, as must  
 “ disgust every reader of true literary taste.  
 “ And I must declare, that his letter through-  
 “ out is void of that liberality, to which he  
 “ \*E seems



“ seems to lay so much claim. As for his cri-  
 “ ticism, upon some parts of your book; the  
 “ school boy, *qui uno partem colit esse Minervam*,  
 “ ought to be ashamed of them. And as for  
 “ his mode of handling your arguments, it is  
 “ executed with such a cautious hand, as if the  
 “ wary casuist feared they would burn his fingers.  
 “ But, it seems, Sir, your “learned friend,” not  
 “ content with the elaborate strictures he has  
 “ already made upon your piece, intends some-  
 “ thing still more formidable and severe against  
 “ you, in the light of a *philologist*. I am sorry  
 “ to say, this intimation carries with it something  
 “ extremely unamiable. Mr. M. affects philo-  
 “ logical knowledge; but he descends so low  
 “ sometimes, that his critiques are only worthy  
 “ of the

“ Tribes of word-catchers that live on syllables.”

“ However, he should cease his triumphing as a  
 “ philologist, till he has answered the Monthly  
 “ Reviewers. For, in the opinion of many, equal  
 “ in classical knowledge to Mr. M. these able  
 “ casuists have refuted every argument which he  
 “ hath founded upon biblical criticism; and  
 “ they have challenged him to a fair combat.  
 “ He may *affect* to treat their strictures with  
 “ sovereign contempt: but under that lies con-  
 “ cealed a dread to take up the gauntlet; of  
 “ which they seem so justly convinced, that they  
 “ declare publicly they “look upon him as  
 “ yielding them the palm.”

“ I remain, dear Sir,

“ Your most obliged friend,

“ And obedient servant.”

May 23, 1781.

\*\*\*

















